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ME 880 Doctoral Seminar in Evangelization

Fall Semester, 2004
 School of World Mission and Evangelism
 Asbury Theological Seminary
 Instructor: George Hunter

I. Course Description (revised):

Advanced readings in literatures that inform Christian Evangelization, with attention to some of the “classic” texts that all advanced students in Evangelization should know, and to texts that reflect, and/or contribute to, an “interdisciplinary” approach to understanding the propagation of Christianity’s gospel. Students will contribute to most of the class sessions out of their reading, research, and reflection. For D. Miss. and Ph.D. students; others by consent of instructor.

II. Course Objectives:

1. Acquire working knowledge of some of the classic texts that inform evangelization.
2. Become conversant with some of the issues within the study of Evangelization.
3. To gain breadth in understanding how evangelization is understood from the perspectives of other academic fields.
4. To gain experience in interfacing the insights of other fields to help inform the strategy and practice of evangelization.
5. To facilitate the student’s capacity for reflection, and critique, in his or her interaction with evangelism literature and evangelism ministries.
6. To contribute to the student’s capacity for advancing the theory, lore, and practice of Christian evangelism.

III. Reading Assignments:

Most of the course sessions will focus on readings that need to be read before the class session for which they are assigned. The books are all available in Asbury’s Cokesbury Bookstore (or online). They are assigned in the following order:

1. Stark, Rodney. The Rise of Christianity. Harper.
2. Fletcher, Richard. The Barbarian Conversion. U. of California Press.
3. James, William. The Varieties of Religious Experience.
4. Rambo, Lewis R. Understanding Religious Conversion. Yale Univ. Press.
5. Patrick, Confession (available on line; click on the ESJ icon).
6. Finney, Charles G. Lectures on Revivals of Religion, chapters 1, 10, 12, and 14 (available on line; click on the ESJ icon).
7. Alcoholics Anonymous, fourth edition.

IV. Requirements and Written Assignments:

Most of the class sessions will expect a (brief) written assignment and a (brief) oral presentation from each student. (Each assignment for each class session is rather specific; the student, however, should not interpret an assignment too narrowly)

There is no final exam, but the course assigns seven written papers. Each paper may interface a textbook’s topic with other source(s) addressing the same issue or interpreting the contribution of the same writer, but the emphasis should be on the student’s interpretation of the assigned reading. The

papers account for 90% of the student's grade; the other 10% will reflect attendance and contributions to learning. (When you present papers in class, it would be useful to come with enough **copies** of the paper for everyone in class.)

Class Sessions

(Subject to modification)

September 8: Introduction, orientation, assignments.

September 15: Insights from Stark's The Rise of Christianity, chapters 1-6.

Come to class prepared to present a one to two page paper summarizing several of Stark's insights or contentions, with your own application or critique.

September 22: Insights from Stark's The Rise of Christianity, chapters 7-10, and Starke's article "Efforts to Christianize Europe, 400-2000, from Journal of Contemporary Religion, Vol. 16, No. 1, 2001 (available on line; click on the ESJ icon).

Come to class prepared to present a one to two page paper summarizing several of Stark's insights or contentions, with your own application or critique.

*September 29: Class papers on the expansion of early Christianity.

Come to class prepared to present a brief research paper (5 to 6 pages), in which you a) summarize and interpret several of Stark's main ideas purportedly accounting for the expansion of early Christianity and b) state and explain your own (provisional) critique, insights, and applications. (Instructor's appraisal will count as 15% of the course grade.)

October 6: Insights from Fletcher's The Barbarian Conversion, chapters 1-6.

a) Come to class prepared to summarize and discuss the Ten Questions that Fletcher identifies in chapter one; identify any additional Questions that should be addressed by scholars in Evangelization.

b) Come to class prepared to present a one to two page paper summarizing some of Stark's insights or contentions, with your own application or critique.

October 13: Insights from Fletcher's The Barbarian Conversion, chapters 7-12.

Come to class prepared to present a one to two page paper summarizing some of Stark's insights or contentions, with your own application or critique.

*October 20: Insights from Fletcher's The Barbarian Conversion, chapters 13-15.

Come to class prepared to present a brief research paper (5 to 6 pages suggested), in which you a) summarize several of Fletcher's main ideas purportedly accounting for the expansion of Christianity from the fourth to the fourteenth centuries, b) state and explain your own (provisional) critique, insights, and applications. (Instructor's appraisal will count as 15% of the course grade.)

*October 27: Read Wm. James, The Varieties of Religious Experience, ch's. 1-10, and 20.

Come to class prepared to present a brief research paper (4 to 5 pages suggested), in which you a) summarize several of William James' main ideas about religious experience and/or religious conversion, and b) state and explain your own (provisional) critique, insights, and applications. (Instructor's appraisal will count as 15% of the course grade.)

*November 3: Read Lewis R. Rambo, Understanding Religious Conversion.

Come to class prepared to present a brief research paper (4 to 5 pages suggested), in which you a) summarize several of Rambo's main ideas about religious conversion, and b) state and explain your own (provisional) critique, insights, and applications. (Instructor's appraisal will count as 15% of the course grade.)

November 10: No class; instructor is attending the NCA convention in Chicago.

*November 17: Read St. Patrick's Confession, and Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People: Preface; I: 23, 26, and 30; III: 3-5, and IV: 27. (available on line; click on the ESJ icon).

Come to class prepared to present a brief research paper (4 to 5 pages suggested), in which you a) summarize several of Patrick's (and/or "Celtic" Mission's) main themes, and b) state and explain your own (provisional) critique, insights, and applications. (Instructor's appraisal will count as 10% of the course grade.) (Hunter's The Celtic Way of Evangelism gives useful perspective for this unit, but is NOT required.)

November 24: No Class; Thanksgiving Break.

*December 1: Read Finney's Lectures on Revivals of Religion, ch's 1, 10, 12, 14.

Come to class prepared to present a brief (4 to 5 pages) research paper reflecting on several of Finney's ideas. a) Summarize several of the writer's driving ideas, convictions, or contentions; b) state and explain your own provisional critique, insights, and applications. (Instructor's appraisal will count 10% of the course grade.)

*December 8: Read Hunter's Radical Outreach, chapter 5 (available on line; click on the ESJ icon), and Alcoholics Anonymous (fourth edition) pp. 1-103, Appendices I and II, and any five testimonies.

Come to class prepared to present a brief research paper (4 to 5 pages suggested) in which you reflect upon this "colleague movement's" approach to reaching and restoring people. Based upon your reading, a) identify several of the recovery movement's main ideas and approaches, and b) some things that the Church might learn (or relearn) from AA about reaching pre-Christian people. (Instructor's appraisal will count as 10% of the course grade.)